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## **Presentations of Works from the Kunstmuseum Bern Collection**

Works from the Kunstmuseum Bern Collection

### **Homage to Herbert Distel**

Aug. 28 – Oct. 7, 2012

Outsider Art from the Collection:

### **Presentation of Works from the Adolf Wölfli Foundation**

Jan. 2012 – Dec. 2012

Window on Contemporary Art

### **Kunstmuseum Bern @ PROGR: changing presentations**

Jan. 2012 – Dec. 2012

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International Fine Art Photography

## **Industrious. Marco Grob & Hiepler, Brunier**

March 2 – May 6, 2012

**Opening:** Thursday, March 1, 2012, 6:30 p.m.

**Press conference / media release dispatch:** Wednesday, Feb. 29, 2012

**As a large-scale project for the centennial anniversary of the Swiss-based international Holcim group, portrait photographer Marco Grob and industrial photographers David Hiepler and Fritz Brunier took pictures of employees and production plants around the world. This laid the foundations for realizing a truly unique artistic investigation. The exhibition will show photographic works of outstanding quality while also documenting how professional commercial photography developed into fine art photography.**

Once again the Kunstmuseum Bern is providing its visitors with an opportunity to explore the world of photography. In contrast to previous exhibitions in the medium, with works by Balthasar Burkhard, Cécile Wick, Paul Senn and others, this year's presentation is not restricted to purely fine art photography – that is, to photos for the sake of photography alone – but to works that evolved from commercial photographic assignments.

In them we can discern how the photographers succeeded in creating a highly individual visual language. Internationally renowned Swiss photographer Marco Grob selected unforgettable faces from over eighty-thousand Holcim Group employees. With his dynamic use of the camera, Grob involves his sitters as partners in a dialogue, giving insight into their lives and setbacks to observers. The Berlin-based photographer duo Hiepler and Brunier communicates the arresting atmosphere of the industrial plants in images marked by an uncanny depth of field, illustrating reality in a way we otherwise would not be able to perceive at a single glance.

With their accounts of reality the three photographers testify to their ability of establishing equality between art photography and truth. The large-format black-and-white photographs display awe-inspiring precision, while the staging of whole picture series increases the density of the ambience in individual photographs. The dialogue between "empty" spaces and the vitality of faces captures moments in time that are both moving and artistically vibrant.

**Curators:** Matthias Frehner, Regula Berger

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Large-format Atmospheric Abstraction

## **Sean Scully. Grey Wolf – Retrospective**

March 9 – June 24, 2012

**Opening:** Thursday, March 8, 2012, 6:30 p.m.

**Press conference / media release dispatch:** Wednesday, March 7, 2012

**In spring 2012, the Kunstmuseum Bern will be showing a retrospective of Irish-American artist Sean Scully (b. 1945), a leading representative of abstract art. The exhibition is to be a joint production of the Kunstmuseum Bern and Lentos Kunstmuseum Linz, and also planned in close collaboration with the artist himself. This enables the Kunstmuseum Bern to provide an overview of Sean Scully's key paintings from all phases in his creative development.**

Already at the age of nine Sean Scully decided he wanted to become a painter. After an apprenticeship in the printing trade he went to night school where he learnt the techniques of painting. During Sean Scully's years of study Mark Rothko was among the artists he discovered who was to have an influential impact on his art: He turned from figurative painting to pursue abstraction. After Scully received a scholarship that allowed him to spend time in New York, he had his first one-man show in a gallery, and all the paintings were sold. From 1984 to 1989 he acquired international fame. Meanwhile, Scully's art is represented in over 80 museum collections all over the world.

Scully's early paintings are typically striped patterns displaying great precision of line, strongly defined areas, and contrasting colors. Later on Scully achieved great depth in his work by painting lines by hand and applying layers of different color tones. Through color Scully achieves a strong emotional quality in his work. He uses mainly black, brown and red tones, leaving visible brushstrokes by applying paint with a stiff brush.

The exhibition is presenting a total of around 57 mostly large-format paintings on loan from US donors and leading European museum collections.

The show will be accompanied by a catalogue in German and English, in which the artist comments personally on individual works. The supporting program will provide diverse events inspired by the atmospheric quality of Scully's art.

**Curators:** Matthias Frehner, Annick Haldemann

**Further stations of the exhibition:** Lentos Kunstmuseum Linz (July 22 – Oct. 7, 2012)

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The Poet as Painter

## «... die Grenzen überfliegen» Hermann Hesse the Painter

March 28 – Aug. 12, 2012

**Opening:** Tuesday, March 27, 2012, 6:30 p.m.

**Press conference / media release dispatch:** Monday, March 26, 2012

**Together with the Hermann Hesse Museum in Montagnola, the Kunstmuseum Bern is presenting the first retrospective of Hermann Hesse's paintings to commemorate the 50th anniversary of the artist and famous author's decease (July 2, 1877 – Aug. 9, 1962).**

Hesse's work as a visual artist played an important role in his development. His concentrated and complex visual language furnishes us with a key to understanding his personal development, how he comprehended art, and his literary work. This groundbreaking exhibition in regard to Hermann Hesse's reception pays tribute to his contribution to modern art.

In 2012, 100 years will have passed since Hermann Hesse moved to Bern. "Ougspurgergut" in Schosshalde, "Lohn" in Kehrsatz, and Bremgarten castle are the sites that are closely affiliated to Hermann Hesse in Bern and where he sought inspiration and stimulation. Hesse's years in Bern from 1912 to 1919 were not only decisive for his literary work. During this period – in which he wrote *Rosshalde*, his novel about an artist – he began his largely unknown career as a painter that culminated in the 1920s and 1930s when he lived in Montagnola.

From the time of his very first attempts at painting, the centenary exhibition recalls all the phases in the artist's creative development, the subject matter he tackled, and the genres and styles he experimented with: early sketches of a great diversity of things, large-format water colors, finely detailed pen-and-ink drawings, and small-format illustrations for writings.

For the celebrations commemorating the 50th anniversary of his decease, Düsseldorf University together with Bern University and the Kunstmuseum Bern are organizing an international conference under the title "... die Grenzen überfliegen". Many scholars from Switzerland and all over the world specializing on the famous author will be presenting recent research and for the first time pay tribute to Hermann Hesse's dual proficiency as poet and painter. The conference will be taking place from March 27 to March 30, 2012, in the Kunstmuseum Bern. It is open to the public and free of charge. For the program in detail please visit [www.kunstmuseumbern.ch](http://www.kunstmuseumbern.ch)

**Curators:** Matthias Frehner (Kunstmuseum Bern), Valentine von Fellenberg (Kunstmuseum Bern), Regina Bucher (Hermann Hesse Museum, Montagnola)

### Further stations of the exhibition:

Museo Hermann Hesse, Montagnola, and Museo Canotone d'Arte, Lugano (Aug. 81.08. – Oct. 21, 2012)

Museum im Kulturspeicher, Würzburg (Nov. 3, 2012 – Jan 20, 2013)

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A Poetic Approach to Post-colonial History

**Zarina Bhimji**

June 1 – Sept. 2, 2012

**Opening:** Thursday, May 31, 2012, 6:30 p.m.

**Press conference / media release dispatch:** Wednesday, May 30, 2012

**In collaboration with Whitechapel Gallery, London, the Kunstmuseum Bern is presenting the first retrospective on Zarina Bhimji, British photographer, filmmaker, and installation artist. Voicing criticism of her times with a gentle lyricism, Bhimji promotes confrontation with the difficult social issues of migration, globalization, and post-colonial history in her work.**

In 1963 the artist was born to Indian parents in Uganda, where she grew up until the family was forced into exile in 1974. She studied art in London and has exhibited in diverse international group shows. In 2007 she was nominated for the Turner Prize.

Based on historical research, Bhimji's films and photographs are poetic investigations of backgrounds and the past. On account of her own experiences in life, the artist weaves fictive events into the post-colonial history related to the countries of her origins and, using this material, constructs fragmentary narratives. In this way she discloses a personal view of the post-colonial history of three continents (Europe, Africa, Asia) and palpably illustrates the complexity of cultural, ethnic, and political identities.

Besides exhibits from her photographic oeuvre and her installation works (among others, loans from the Victoria & Albert Museum in London), her three films *Out Of Blue* (2002), *Waiting* (2007), and – produced especially for the exhibition – her new film *Yellow Patch* (2011) will be presented in Switzerland for the very first time.

The exhibition and accompanying publication concentrate on a very fecund approach in international contemporary art and, with its thematic focus, gives us the opportunity to comprehend historical transformations in a global context. The show portrays an artist who gently criticizes the times she lives in while promoting social confrontation with the difficult issues of migration, globalization, and post-colonial history in a poetic way. With her lyrical re-interpretation of post-colonial history, Zarina Bhimji throws light on Europe's involvement in global events and points out the complicated histories of people who land on its shores as refugees.

**Curator:** Kathleen Bühler

**Further stations of the exhibition:** Whitechapel Gallery, London (Jan. 19 – March 9, 2012)

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A Great Painter of the 20th Century

## Antonio Saura. The Retrospective

July 6 – Nov. 11, 2012

**Opening:** Thursday, July 5, 2012, 6:30 p.m.

**Press conference / media release dispatch:** Wednesday, July 4, 2012

**Antonio Saura (1930-1998) counts as one of the key artists of the 20th century and is one of the leading champions of Spanish painting in his times. We find his work presented in most prominent collections of modern art all over the world. A comprehensive retrospective of his art comprising over 190 works illustrative of his entire oeuvre, revealing its breadth of scope and complexity, is being organized by the Kunstmuseum Bern together with the Museum Wiesbaden and the archives antonio saura foundation in Meinier near Geneva, which preserves and researches the extensive artistic and literary legacy of the artist while making it available to the public.**

Self-educated, Saura began his artistic career in 1947 under the influence of Yves Tanguy and Joan Miró. In search of a "true landscape of the unconscious," he started producing his first surrealist works from 1950 onwards. Subsequently he stayed in Paris for quite a while (1954-1955). Since 1956 he began to develop an extremely individual style that is distinct on account of its expressive structure and strongly gestural character in the thematic series *Damen 7 (Ladies 7)* and *Selbstbildnisse (Portraits)*. In his comprehensive oeuvre Saura repeatedly reveals his preoccupation with artists such as Diego Vélasquez, Francisco de Goya, and Pablo Picasso.

The exhibition focuses on all phases of the artist's creative development, represents his large series of pictures through key works, and, not least, explores facets of his illustrative and graphic oeuvre. Additionally, also sculptures by the artist will be on show. It is an ambitious project, concerning the first large-scale retrospective since the landmark 1979 exhibition organized by Ad Petersen in the Amsterdam Stedelijk Museum while Saura was still alive.

Today, thirteen years after the artist's decease, our view of Saura's work has changed as research increases our depth of knowledge about this artist. The richly illustrated catalogue that will be published for the exhibition intends to address Saura's contribution to art, and the various chapters will comprise introductions to the artist's different creative phases and to individual pictorial series, as well as contain corresponding comprehensive reference material. For the exhibition, the archives antonio saura publication *antonio saura par lui-même* will be published in German translation. In this work the artist as writer elucidates his art.

**Curators:** Matthias Frehner (director of the Kunstmuseum Bern), Alexander Klar (director of the Museum Wiesbaden), Cäsar Menz (art historian and honorary director of the Musées d'art et d'histoire, Geneva, co-curator), Olivier Weber-Cafilich (president of the archives antonio saura foundation, co-curator)

**Further stations of the exhibition:** Museum Wiesbaden (Nov. 30, 2012 - March 17, 2013)

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Meret Oppenheim: Muse and Source of Inspiration

## **Meret's Sparks Surrealisms in Contemporary Swiss Art**

Oct. 19, 2012 – Feb. 10, 2013

**Opening:** Thursday, Oct. 18, 2012, 6:30 p.m.

**Press conference / media release dispatch:** Wednesday, Oct. 17, 2012

**The exhibition investigates Meret Oppenheim's legacy and her impact on recent Swiss art in homage to this famous Swiss woman artist, who would have celebrated her hundredth birthday in 2013. At the same time, the show will scrutinize the role of contemporary surrealism.**

Paintings and sculptures by Maya Bringolf, Tatjana Gerhard, Francisco Sierra, Vidya Gastaldon and a number of other artists will be juxtaposed with works by Meret Oppenheim.

For Meret Oppenheim, surrealism was her initial point of reference in Paris, and subsequently she pursued it as a form in which she could freely express own emotional experience and integrate her study of C.G. Jung's teachings. In her individual coining of surrealism she saw it as an experimental field in which the "Defiance in the Face of Freedom" was made visible. But what do artists gain from this style of art today? Can surrealism in face of burgeoning virtual reality still slip into its traditional role? Or does in fact the adoption of surrealism in our times mark the manifestation of a return to traditional ways of thinking?

The themed group exhibition will contribute to a reappraisal of Meret Oppenheim's impact on art in Switzerland. As a unique phenomenon, Meret Oppenheim had no own students who further explored the avenues she opened up, but nevertheless her work and life are still sources of inspiration for young artists today. Creating an artistic dialogue that overarches epochs and several generations by exhibiting her work alongside that of recent art approaches, we can recognize the relevance of Oppenheim's early 20th-century art for today's world and again experience its force of expression.

In combining older and more recent art, the exhibition and accompanying publication elucidate the current pertinence of Meret Oppenheim's work and highlight one of the cornerstones of the Kunstmuseum Bern's collection.

**Curator:** Kathleen Bühler

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Language, Art, Music

# «Zur Unzeit gezeit...» Otto Nebel, Painter and Poet

Nov. 9, 2012 – Feb. 17, 2013

**Opening:** Thursday, Nov. 8, 2012, 6:30 p.m.

**Press conference / media release dispatch:** Wednesday, Nov. 7, 2012

**On the occasion of Otto Nebel's (1892-1973) 120th birthday, the exhibition will be showing for the first time the entire oeuvre of this artist and author who lived in Bern for many decades. The focal point of the show is how visual representation in painting, drawing, the print medium, as well as collage interacts and interrelates with literary texts, that is, the exhibition explores the relationship between text and image. Nebel's key paintings and poetical works will be presented according to thematic subdivisions and different stations of his life.**

In the case of Otto Nebel it is not only highly relevant to speak of dual talents. Like many of the avant-garde of the early 20th century, Nebel experimented with language, the visual arts, and music. His overriding goal was "to produce models of harmony from symbolic and allegorical elements." The exhibition elucidates how the lyrical is irrevocably bound to his painting and lucidly illustrates that it is time to rediscover Nebel as an artist working on an intermedia basis.

Nebel was conspicuous as a word artist as member of the "Sturm" movement connected to Herwarth Walden. For its publication he produced not only texts but also the initial linocuts. In the 1920s Nebel created his *Runenfugen* (*Runic Fugues*) – poems that comprised a limited number of letters. The degree of abstraction he achieved therein only later became manifest in his art as well. Nebel was an artist who paid extreme attention to detail and was technically very thorough. He often resorted to a laborious process in order to "construct" his paintings and colored sheets by applying layer after layer on a support that he had previously primed several times. Sojourns in Italy were decisive for his work. There he produced a color atlas that was to influence much of his art. Analogous to the characters in the *Runenfugen*, color and light form an independent visual domain in the partly figurative landscapes and cityscapes. In the mid-1930s, Nebel increasingly turned away from figurative art and explored the use of a symbolical visual language that he called *Runenbilder*. However, he did not really consider this form of visual language as "non-figurative", as he said so himself: "In my art you find only things ... pure events from innermost life."

In 1969, Nebel donated around 200 works of art to the Kunstmuseum Bern, and after he died his estate was incorporated into the Otto Nebel Foundation, which is situated in Bern. The artist's literary work is now kept in the Swiss Literary Archives. Most of the exhibits in the show have been selected and augmented by works from gallery and private collections, including also cross-references to artists who were important for Nebel on a personal and artistic level. A richly illustrated accompanying publication is intended to be a reference book on Otto Nebel's poetic and artistic work.

**Curators:** Therese Bhattacharya-Stettler (Kunstmuseum Bern, project management), Steffan Biffiger (Otto Nebel Foundation, co-curator), Bettina Braun (co-curator for the literary section), Stefan Frey (Otto Nebel Foundation, consultant)

**Further stations of the exhibition:** Schlossmuseum Murnau (summer 2013).

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Mutual Inspiration

**Itten–Klee. Cosmos of Color**

Nov. 30, 2012 – March 31, 2013

**Opening:** Thursday, Nov. 29, 2012, 6:30 p.m.

**Press conference / media release dispatch:** Wednesday, Nov. 28, 2012

**On the basis of prominent key works, the exhibition will investigate the artistic confrontation between Johannes Itten and Paul Klee on the subject of color. In the process the show will explore related aspects such as color and esoteric notions, aura and harmony of color, color and abstraction, color and nature, and color division. For the very first time we will be able to demonstrate that not only Klee influenced Itten, but also that Itten inspired Klee, and that both artists drew from a mutual source. Additionally the exhibition will explore color theory and how it was represented in the notes and diaries of both artists.**

Johannes Itten and Paul Klee stand out in the history of 20th-century art for their significant contributions to color theory. Both artists were convinced that the order of colors was structured according to the set principles of a self-contained universe. New research has shown that both artists drew on mutual historical-intellectual sources and that they reciprocally influenced one another as well. Both developed their ideas on color over decades of reflection and work, and comprehensively applied them in their art.

The lives and careers of both Swiss artists converged at many points. For example, Paul Klee's father was the first to inspire Itten in his artistic pursuits. Conversely, Klee's appointment to work at the Bauhaus in Weimar was chiefly supported by Itten. Well-nigh simultaneously in 1914/1915, both artists began their lifelong investigation and study of color theory as well as the structures inherent in the universe of color. In the case of Klee it was during a trip to Tunis, while Itten's interest was sparked off by Adolf Hölzel's color theory in Stuttgart. Over many years, both artists took an interest in each other's art and also exchanged artworks.

This makes it all the more surprising that Johannes Itten and Paul Klee have never been shown together in a monographic exhibition exploring their work as an artistic duo.

A scholarly and comprehensive catalogue will be published to accompany the exhibition. It will elucidate the respective concepts of color and the art-historical context thereof, and document the new sources in relevance to the exhibits. On Nov. 30 and Dec. 1, 2012, a two-day symposium with academic contributions on the significance of color in the art and color theories of Johannes Itten, Paul Klee, and Otto Nebel will take place. The symposium will be organized by the Kunstmuseum Bern in collaboration with the Zentrum Paul Klee.

**Curators:** Christoph Wagner (professor of art history, Regensburg), Monika Schäfer (Kunstmuseum Bern)

**Further stations of the exhibition:** Martin-Gropius-Bau, Berlin (April 25 to July 29, 2013)

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## **Presentations of Works from the Collection of the Kunstmuseum Bern**

Works from the Kunstmuseum Bern Collection

### **Homage to Herbert Distel**

Aug. 28 – Oct. 7, 2012

To celebrate Bern artist Herbert Distel's 70th birthday (b. 1942), the Kunstmuseum Bern is putting together a small homage in a gallery-sized exhibition. In it we plan to give a concentrated overview of his art with works from the collection representing various phases in the artist's creative development.

As a painter, filmmaker, video artist and composer, sculptor, installation and concept artist, Bern artist Herbert Distel (b. 1942) plays a pivotal role in experimentation with and addressing artistic media in his work.

Besides sculptural works made out of polyester (1965 – 1970) from his early work, we will be showing the project *Canaris* (1970) as well as photographic works from the 1990s and films.

**Curator:** Claudine Metzger

Outsider-Art from the Collection

### **Presentation of Works from the Adolf Wölfli Foundation**

Jan. 2012 – Dec. 2012

The Adolf Wölfli Foundation was founded by Elka Spoerri (1924-2002). The Foundation administers the estate of the "writer, poet, artist and composer" Adolf Wölfli (1864-1930) and, since its founding in 1975, enjoys guest status at the Museum of Fine Arts Bern.

Initially an outsider in every sense of the word, the work of Adolf Wölfli is one of the highlights of the Kunstmuseum Bern. Controversial, unique and visionary, it repeatedly challenges the viewer anew. Today, his drawings and collages are collected and exhibited all over the world, his writings appear in the most diverse publications, and admiration for his vision remains widespread. Changing exhibitions of Adolf Wölfli's works are presented at the Kunstmuseum Bern year-round.

**Curator and head of the foundation:** Daniel Baumann

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Window on Contemporary Art
**Kunstmuseum Bern @ PROGR: changing presentations**

Jan. 2012 – Dec. 2012

**The Kunstmuseum Bern's exhibition space in the PROGR building offers a variety of diverse exhibitions and collaborations with various art and artistic institutions in and in the vicinity of Bern.**

For the very first time and as a special attraction in 2012 we are presenting the winner of the Credit Suisse Video Art Award. During the 10th-anniversary celebrations for Bern's Museum Night, a group of artists will take over the exhibition space and realize the project "20 Stops" organized by Jürg Lüdi. On the occasion of the performance festival BONE 15 late fall, the Kunstmuseum Bern will be showing a group of works from its rich stock of performative art.

In the months in between the above-mentioned presentations, we will be showing new acquisitions as well and works that have not been exhibited for a long while from the Kunstmuseum Bern's Contemporary Art Collection in dialogue with the Stadtgalerie's exhibition program.

**Curator:** Kathleen Bühler

Datum	Stadtgalerie	KMB@PROGR
- 21.01.12	Cantonale Berne Jura	Cantonale Berne Jura
2.02.–10.03.12	Tashi Brauen: Gruppenprojekt Tashi&Freunde	Bettina Disler: Videotrilogie
16.03.–21.04.12	NEUstadt LAB - 20 stops	20 stops
3.05.–9.06.	Alles selbst gemacht!	Crédit Suisse Videokunstpreis
10.05. –7.07.	Labor: Yvonne Barbara Maria Scarabello u.a.	Kotscha Reist (evtl. Buchvernissage am 1.06.12)
8.07. –1.08.	Sommerpause	Sommerpause
2.08.–1.09.	Hannah Külling	Anne-Mie Kerckhoven, Chloé Piene (Arbeiten auf Papier)
6.–30.09.12	Biennale Bern	Biennale Bern: Maria Eichhorn, <i>Die Antellscheine der Kunsthalle Bern</i> (2004/5)
Oktober	Matthias Wyss	Quynh Dong, <i>Karaoke Night</i> (2009), Filmprojektion
27.10.–1.12.	Folklore, Künstlerinnen aus der Schweiz und Kanada	BONE-Festival (4.–8.12.12): Werkgruppe aus der Slg.
Dez. / Jan.	Cantonale Berne Jura	Cantonale Berne Jura

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